

Perhaps the largest community in the canyon is what is now an interesting history as told by a 75 year-old son of one of the original homesteaders to the area, Justin C. Stewart. Much of the following information comes from a book by Stewart, which as of the winter of 1989, had yet to be published. The Sundance Resort people are reportedly in the process of publishing his book titled, *A History of Sundance Utah*.

In the summer of 1899, the same year the railway was completed through Provo Canyon, the area just east of Timp was first surveyed. The government surveyor was Andrew Jackson Stewart Jr., and his two sons, John R. Stewart(Justin's father), and Scott P. Stewart. The young men were 20 and 22 years of age. After seeing the beauty of the North Fork, these two fellows vowed they would homestead the area after the public survey was completed.

In the year 1900, these two young brothers got all their family involved(aunts, uncles and in-laws) and ended up homesteading 1416 hectares(3500 acres) in the area where the Sundance Ski Resort and ski runs, all the summer homes and Aspen Grove are now located. Under the Homestead Act, each person was allowed only 160 acres, or a quarter section(one section is one square mile, or 640 acres—259 hectares). But with the help of relatives, they got it all. As things worked out, the two brothers put together what they called the *North Fork Investment Company*, which combined all of the homesteaded land. In short, it was a family affair.

In the beginning, all of the family members involved ended up building and making improvements on each quarter section as the Homestead Act specified. Most of them built a small wooden platform, with a tent on top, which satisfied the requirements of the act. They also built a road-of-sorts to the

area. Justin Stewart says it wasn't really a road, but an old sheep trail which was also used to drag logs down the V-shaped canyon to Wildwood and to a sawmill in Provo Canyon. As time went on, the family built 13 simple bridges over the small stream between Wildwood and Stewart Flat(which is where Sundance Ski Resort is located today).

By the beginning of 1920, the County Road Commission was petitioned by members of the Stewart family and BYU's Eugene L.(Timp) Roberts(the original Timp Hike organizer) to build a road from Wildwood to Aspen Grove. The commission acted by appropriating \$5000 for an 8 km road running from the Provo Canyon highway at Wildwood to Aspen Grove. The contractor was Isaac Wadley of Pleasant Grove. The road bed Wadley built was almost in the same place as the present road alignment of today. Between Wildwood and Stewart Flat they reduced the number of bridges from 13 to 8, and made it good enough for automobiles to reach Aspen Grove. This first rough road was completed in the summer of 1920(according to some Provo Daily Herald accounts of the Timp Hike of 1920) and about 50 cars made it up to Aspen Grove for the Timp Hike.

In 1921, Scott P. Stewart and John R. Stewart, donated 10 acres(4 hectares) of land at Aspen Grove to BYU for the creation of a summer school campus.

Several years later the road was completely rebuilt. This time it was the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads which did the work between 1929 and 1933. That construction put the road in the same location as it is today. In 1933, the road was oiled for the first time, and in 1937 was paved all the way from Provo Canyon to Aspen Grove. In 1921 the road over the top from Aspen Grove to the head of American Fork Canyon was rebuilt and made good enough for average cars, but it wasn't a real good road for several more years. Years later and after much improvement, it was given the name **Alpine Scenic Loop**.

Throughout the early years the North Fork area was used only during the summer months. The cabins were not built for the cold weather and the road was closed by snow. During this time, there were some interesting events as discussed by Justin C. Stewart in his soon-to-be-published book on Sundance.

Stewart mentions the family's attempts at summer farming. It was first tried at what they called Middle Field. This place is located between the two major switchbacks between Sundance and Aspen Grove, and on the southwest side of the road(today it's a horse pasture). Sometime during World War I, a Mrs. Thurber planted and grew potatoes in Middle Field, and they won first prize in the Dry Land Potato category at the Utah State Fair.

John Stewart Jr. held part of what the family called the Big Field, which is the largest open area within North Fork. The Big Field is located about one km north, northwest of the ski resort and 500



The old Timp Haven Ski Resort in about 1954. Lunch stand on the right(Ray Stewart foto).

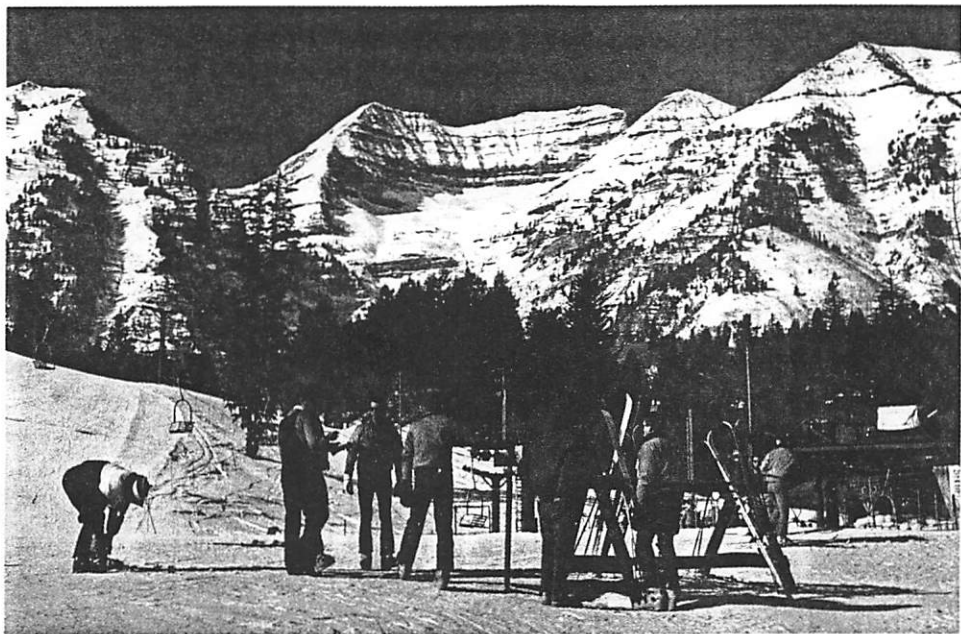
meters north of Middle Field. It can't be seen from the road. In the 1880's and 1890's, this was a favorite place for sheepmen to take their flocks. The Stewarts remember it as being totally over-grazed and nothing but dust when they first homesteaded the place. However, in about 1931 John decided he would try raising potatoes. He bought a small tractor and tilled 10 to 15 acres (4 to 6 hectares) of the Big Field. His first crop of Dry Land Potatoes won first prize in the Utah State Fair.

After the first road was completed to Aspen Grove and when the BYU summer school was in operation, Scott P. Stewart and his wife Myrtle Maiben, opened a small store in his cabin which was very near the summer school and where the lower parking lot to the Theater-in-the-Pines is now located. The store first began to operate in about 1922 and was open only during the summer when the school was operating. After the huge avalanche of 1936 wiped out the cabin, the little store was moved to another relative's cabin, and it remained open until about the mid-1950's when the lady who operated it died. This was Mrs. John R. (Ester) Stewart, who used to do a good business each year when the Annual Timp Hike was on. She also hired young students to carry food and drinks up the mountain to sell at Emerald Lake during the annual hike in the 1930's.

In the summer of 1938, the North Fork Investment Company permitted a saw mill to be set up at Stewart Flat, which was very near where the ski resort is now located (it was at the Meadow, about 200 meters to the northwest of Redford's present film editing building). The operator was allowed to work only one season and cut those trees which John R. Stewart had marked. Many of the trees cut were on the present-day ski slopes to the south.

Rather late in the history of North Fork, Raymond R. Stewart, began a small ski resort named **Timp Haven**. According to Stewart's account, a group called the Timp Mountain Club, had persuaded a Mr. I. E. Daniels to open a ski area in Hobbie Creek Canyon east of Springville in the early 1940's. Daniels had put together a truck body with a series of pulleys which served as power for a rope tow. The experiment in Hobbie Creek failed, but later Stewart bought the equipment and took it to the area of the MIA Lodge (now called the Timp Lodge) part way up the slope from the present-day lower terminal of the Sundance ski lifts. A small area was cleared and an attempt was made to operate the ski tow in the winter of 1944-45, but it was a failure.

During the next summer, the equipment was overhauled and rebuilt and in the winter of 1945-46 they tried it again. They occasional had trouble getting up the snowy road above Wildwood and even more difficulties getting from the end of the plowed road to the rope tow site. Getting gasoline to the tow was a chore and since they only operated the equipment on weekends, they had to lug the batteries up and down each week to keep them charged. Junior Bounous and Frank Hirst were prominent men who helped with the project.



Sundance Ski Resort with Cascade Cirque and surrounding peaks in the background.

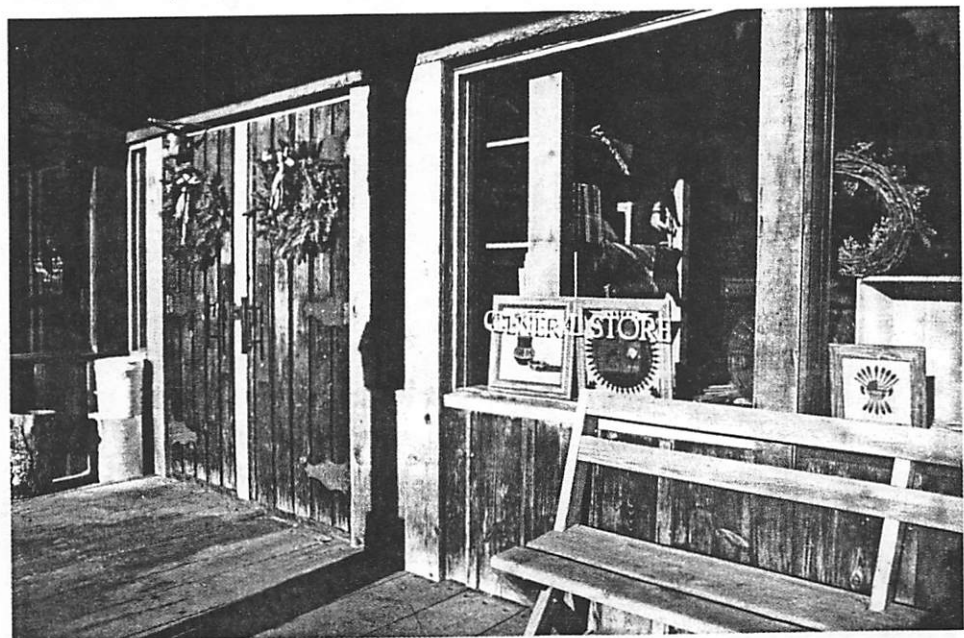
During the summer of 1946, Stewart hired Stan Roberts of Provo to bulldoze another clearing down-slope near the present-day lower terminals, and all the rope tow equipment was moved down-hill. Four hundred meters of new rope was purchased and made into one long strand. This gave the resort a 200 meter-long rope tow. Stewart bought two old cabins and put them in place at what was known as Stewart Flat. One housed the rope tow and equipment; the other was made into a lunch stand operated by his wife Ava. Provo City installed lights for night skiing and organized a ski school for the next season. BYU also started skiing classes which helped promote skiing and kept the Raymond R. Stewart family alive. They considered the winter of 1946-47 a success, by their standards.

In the summer of 1947, the rope tow was moved to the west about 100 meters, and a new cable tow was installed in its place. This opened up new country to skiers. In 1953 there was a merger between Raymond R. Stewart, brother S. Paul, and Junior Bounous. They bought a used chair lift which had been used in the Park City area, and installed it at Timp Haven. In 1957, a new Poma lift from France was bought and installed further up the slopes near Dry Lake. The lower terminal was later wiped out by a snowslide in 1963. In 1960, S. Paul Stewart took over the ski resort and ran it alone. In 1965, the resort's first all-electric double chair lift was installed--another big leap forward. This was called the Mandan lift and it's still operating today. In 1969, a second double chair lift was installed. This is what they call the Navajo. Over the years the resort gradually grew into what it is today.

In the 1950's, a water pipeline was laid from Aspen Grove Spring to the vicinity of Stewart Flats and the Timp Haven Ski Resort. A bit later, the Stewart Family Company began selling lots to the public. One of the later buyers of a two-acre lot was Charles Robert Redford and wife Lola Van Wagenen of Provo, on July 29(recorded on August 1), 1965. The Redford's first cabin was right next to the road, and after the movie *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* came out in the late 1960's, it became necessary for him to grudgingly put up a chain-link fence for privacy sake.

In the late 1960's, Redford made the movie *Jeremiah Johnson*, much of which was filmed in the Sundance and North Fork area. Because of his movie successes, he suddenly acquired a small fortune which needed to be invested. Negotiations took place and on August 5, 1968, there were two purchases recorded in the Utah County court house. One purchase for about half the property was in the area north of the ski resort. Redford himself bought this part, which was most of the holdings of the Stewart Canyon Corporation and which amounted to about 477 hectares(1179 acres). It was 6 separate Stewart families who sold the property.

The second half of the sale involved the Timp Haven Ski Resort itself belonging to S. Paul Stewart Enterprises. This part was officially bought by the Wildwood Development Corporation. Redford had 4



The rustic front to the small store at Sundance.

partners in this half of the deal. They were Stanley Collins, Hans Estlin, Robert M. Gottschalk and the Coudert Brothers. This purchase involved most of the present ski areas of the resort which included about 900 hectares(over 2200 acres). With this acquisition and the release of the movie, *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* not long afterwards, the name of the entire area was changed to **Sundance**.

In recent years and with Redford's financial investments, Sundance has grown into a major ski resort. The original 1377 hectares(3379 acres) has grown into about 2400 hectares(6000 acres), according to Terry Minger, president of the Sundance Institute. But there's a lot more there today than just skiing. Sundance is the home of the Sundance Institute, founded by Robert Redford in 1980, which helps create new film making in the United States. The Institute also sponsors the annual United States Film Festival at Park City and operates the Sundance Summer Theatre, which has performances at a mountain-side amphitheatre from Mondays through Saturdays and from June through early September.

In one of the buildings west of the ski lifts are facilities for editing films. The movie, *Milagro Bean Field War* was edited there. Sundance is also the home of the Institute for Resource Management, an organization dedicated to preserving America's natural resources.

Right at the bottom of the ski lifts is a building housing a small general store which sells gifts, souvenir items, books and hand crafts. Next to it in the same building is the Tree Room Restaurant and Grill for dining. There's another building for skiers near the parking lot which houses a ski rental & repair shop and a cafeteria. Over the years, the resort has built a number of rustic cabins and cottages uphill and to the west of the resort, which are used for accommodating tourists and guests of the Institute.

Beyond Sundance and about 4 kms up the North Fork to the northwest and along the Alpine Scenic Loop Road is **Aspen Grove**. It involves both a public picnic site and campground, plus the BYU Aspen Grove Alumni Association Camp. This is not a permanent settlement, but the road to the site is cleared of snow, and there are some activities there on Saturdays during winter months. It started out as the beginning point for hikers going up the mountain on the Annual Timp Hike, but later evolved into a BYU summer school. Eugene E. Campbell discussed it in his unpublished *History of Provo Canyon*. He states:

The first intimation of an Alpine Summer School came in a report of [BYU] President Harris to the Executive Committee at a session held August 15, 1921, in which he stated that the North Fork Investment Company had proffered to the University a tract of land in the North Fork of Provo Canyon, adjoining Aspen Grove, for camping and other such purposes as the school might wish to make of it.



Ski trail grooming machines at Sundance. The east peaks of Timp in the background.

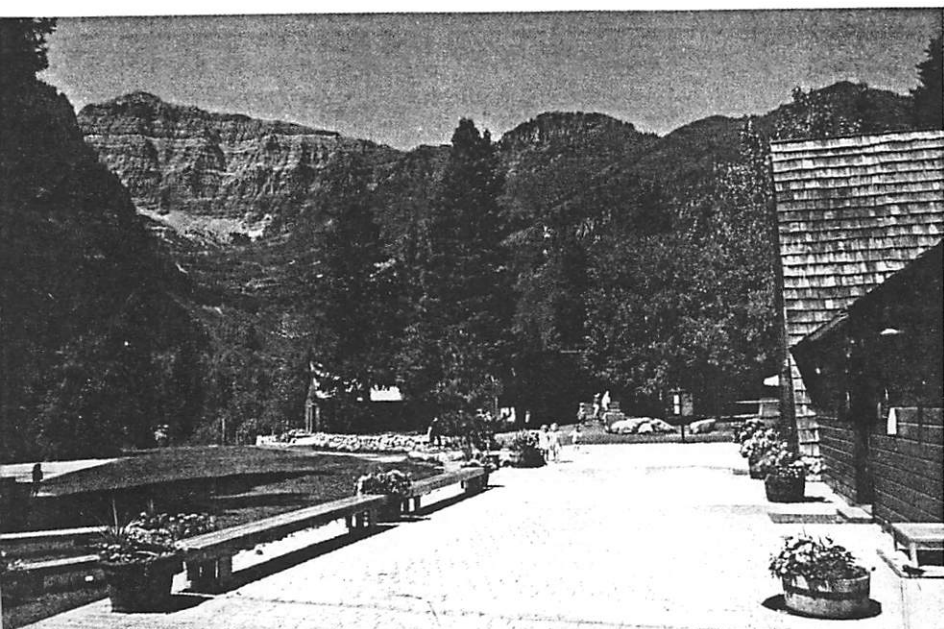
resident Harris had always felt that Brigham Young University should avail itself of the natural educational resources of the mountains surrounding Provo, and under his promptings the offer was accepted. J. William Knight was appointed to represent the committee in making a selection of the tract. A selection of ten acres [4 hectares] adjacent to Aspen Grove was made and a deed therefore executed by the investment company. The personnel of the company was as follows: John R. Stewart and family, Scott P. Stewart and family, Joseph Nelson and family, Rose Young Stewart and Melissa J. Stewart, all of Provo.

It was on July 3, 1922, when BYU finalized plans to create an Alpine Summer School at Aspen Grove. The first summer it was held was in 1922. At that time they used army tents for both students and faculty, because they had no permanent buildings. After two successful summers, it became necessary to purchase more land. These summer school sessions continued through World War II, but afterwards the summer school changed its headquarters to the Provo Campus. Some of the classes taught after the war were geology, geography, botany, zoology and art.

The summer school continued until 1963. At that time it was decided to alter the situation and create a new program. The property was turned over to the BYU Alumni Association which began new recreation oriented facilities. In recent years the association has built two lodges, a large recreation and dining hall, cabins, a swimming pool, basketball and tennis court, and baseball diamond. The facilities are open full-time during the summer months, and part-time in winter when snow is deep enough for snowshoeing, cross-country skiing and snowmobiling. In winter the lodge is open on Saturdays only and they rent out skis and snowshoes and groom several trails in the area.

Back now to Provo Canyon. Further east in what the author calls Upper Provo Canyon, was a place called **Hoover's or Hoover's Cabins**. This was on land originally owned by a Wilford D. Wright back in 1885. On January 8, 1896, about 130 hectares (320 acres) was bought by a John W. Hoover. Hoover was a cattle and sheep rancher in the early days. Hoover's original home was on the highway near a spring, but the ranch itself was up on some flats to the north just over a hill. In the late 1930's, the family built several cabins which housed some of the men who worked on the Deer Creek Dam. Later, each of the sons bought their home sites and rented the cabins. As time went on, one of the sons named Jean, bought most of the original spread. Today, all of the ranch except the cabins on the highway, is owned by a development company under the name of Canyon Meadows.

In the canyon bottom just below Deer Creek Dam is a group of summer homes which is called **Deer Creek Park**. The river bottom land was originally bought from the state in 1909 by John McEwan

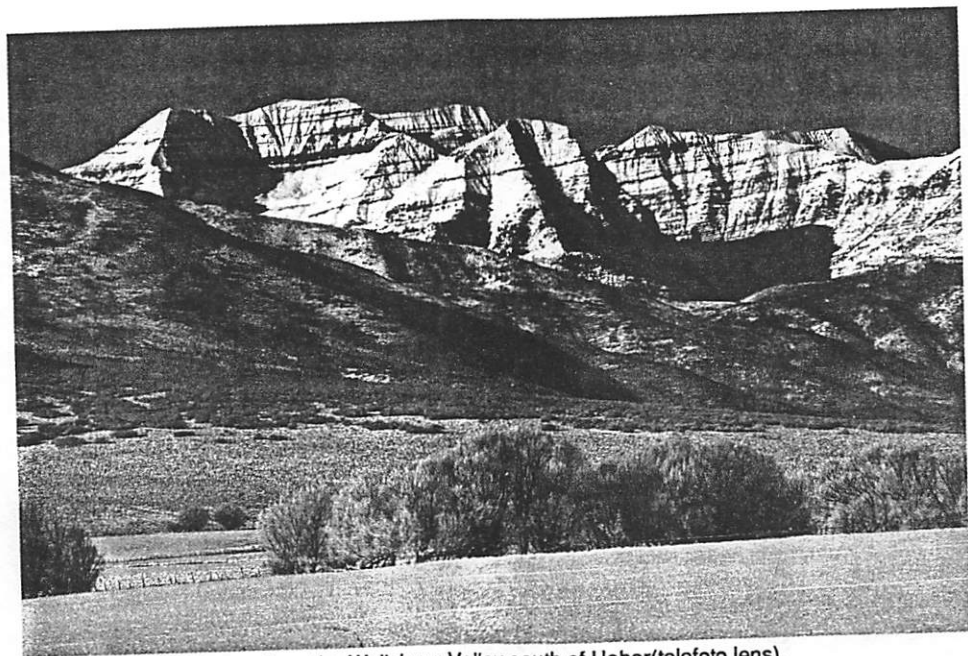


front of one of the lodges at Aspen Grove. This complex is now run by the BYU Alumni Association.

and Edwin Van Wagenen. Later in time, the Rub Weeks family owned a large parcel of land in the area, and it was Weeks who started to develop the park and sell lots. In the years when the dam was being built(late 1930's), Weeks opened another *beer joint*, but it didn't stay open long. Today there are 18 different lots, each with a summer cabin. One of the owners has developed a small private campground. You can see this area from the highway just before you arrive on the dam.

Just below the dam and to the north of the highway are several homes along the lower end of Deer Creek. These are homes of the men and families who maintain the hydroelectric plant below Deer Creek Dam.

In the far eastern end of Provo Canyon, is **Deer Creek Reservoir**. Construction began on the dam in 1938 and was completed in 1941. This project provides water for irrigation as well as drinking water for Salt Lake City, Provo, Orem, Pleasant Grove, Lindon, American Fork and Lehi. In 1958, a hydroelectric power station was completed which generates 4950 kilowatts of power.



Mt. Timpanogos as seen from the Wallsburg Valley south of Heber(telefoto lens).